

**PIONEER UNION  
Elementary School District**

**District CDS Code: 1663990**

**District Charter Renewal Application**

**2014-2019**

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## **RATIONALE/FOUNDING GROUP**

The Pioneer Elementary Charter School District (1617 student enrollment) serves a growing community in northwest Hanford, California which has a population of approximately 50,000 people. Hanford is located in the Central San Joaquin Valley in Kings County and has 3 school districts within the city limits and 14 total in all of Kings County. Hanford is home of the county seat, and prides itself on the small town feel with big town services. Education and higher learning opportunities are highly valued and nurtured throughout the community.

The student population of the Pioneer District is a mixture of children of farm workers and farmers; professionals and homemakers; Naval base officers and enlisted; small and large business owners; self-employed and retirees; literally every walk of life is represented. The school district, in existence since 1870, takes pride in meeting the needs of all its students, and, as a result, the district enjoys the overwhelming support of its parents, teachers and community members. The District student population mirrors the community of Hanford with 45% White, 38% Hispanic%, 5% African American, 4% Asian, and 3% Filipino.

The district's schools foster a secure, friendly, environment in which students experience a wide variety of learning activities through reading labs; growing technology; experimental science activities; music, arts and crafts; and competitive athletics, as well as the fundamentals of basic education. Parents, teachers, and administrators frequently work together on school issues and projects, including school structure, curriculum, school environment, and a variety of activities aimed at student success and maintaining the high expectations for all philosophy.

In 1993, Pioneer Union Elementary School District became the FIRST charter school district in the state. Since its inception, as the PIONEER Elementary Charter School District, the district has experienced growth in ADA; increased test scores; expansion of programs, services, and offerings for students; and has seen an enhanced enthusiasm for "thinking out of the box" about public education. Additionally, two of the three schools in the District, Pioneer Middle School and Frontier Elementary, have received the California Distinguished School Award. The third school, Pioneer Elementary School, is eligible for the 2013 award.

The following charter petition renewal proposal is a reflection of the support expressed by the district's employees and the citizens of the Pioneer Learning Community. It also reflects the constant efforts of the district to prepare students to become productive citizens in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. The district motto, "A learning community dedicated to excellence" is lived daily in taking to heart the challenge of preparing children to communicate effectively; gather, use, and produce information; make informed, responsible decisions; become life-long learners; and enthusiastically embrace challenges and responsibilities.

Placed in the context of creating a learning community, these over-riding concepts are encouraged by the support of parents and families, drawing its standards from the initial strategic planning in the early 1990's and encompassing the rapidly growing and changing needs to stay competitive in today's global society.

The belief that becoming a charter would allow the school district to better serve our students and community as well as distinguish itself in the education profession prompted the stakeholders to pursue the original charter petition. The opportunity to have more flexibility with programs and staffing; embracing technology as a powerful tool; ensuring all students

would have an opportunity to continue in the arts and music (curriculum which has been eliminated in many of California's districts as part of the accountability movement) have become not only motivators in meeting the needs of students and parents—but expectations for a complete educational program in developing our citizens of tomorrow. Through this charter, the district becomes partners with parents in the education of their students. The individual responsibilities of each group – parents, district, and students – are enumerated in the Charter District/Parent/ Student Compact, making it everyone's responsibility to ensure student growth and achievement. This five-year charter petition renewal challenges the district to evaluate, improve, and to be accountable

## **ELEMENT I: EDUCATIONAL PHILOSOPHY AND PROGRAM**

### **Vision Statement:**

The Pioneer Union Elementary School District, in partnership with parents and the community, will build the foundation for student academic and social success.

### **Mission Statement:**

In order to challenge all students to learn, achieve and act with purpose and compassion, the Pioneer Union School District will develop and produce motivated and confident students who will:

- Meet or exceed grade level academic standards.
- Become Life-long learners.
- Effectively communicate.
- Become contributing citizens of the community
- Be prepared for a successful future.

### **Core Values**

- We Believe in Excellence: We exist to help each of our students develop his or her intellectual and physical potential, and assist in the social, moral, and emotional development of the student.
- We Care about the Individual: We respect the individual needs of our children and our families and work to find ways to meet those needs.
- We Strive to Improve: We believe that life is an ongoing process of learning and improvement. As we grow in stature, we will continue to grow in our understanding of others and ourselves.
- We are a "Learning Community Dedicated to Excellence"!

### Educational Philosophy

The Pioneer Charter creates a “learning community” which provides support to parents and families, while holding high expectations and standards. The district curriculum is founded in Common Core State Standards and instructional practices on current researched based methodologies. The District believes that a well-educated person in the 21<sup>st</sup> century is one that meets or exceeds grade level academic standards; are life-long learners; can effectively communicate; think critically and problem solve; possess the skills and knowledge to be college or career ready; and are contributing citizens of the community.

The Charter will continue to promote a sense of family and provide support regardless of family means or circumstances to ensure student success. In short, the Charter seeks to provide students with maximized opportunities for all to not only learn, but thrive!

The Pioneer Charter is based on the following tenets and beliefs:

1. The strength of the partnership between parents and the schools is a primary determinant of student success.
2. Teachers, parents, students, administration, the board, and the broader community all should participate and contribute to the governance of the school district.
3. Students will rise to meet our expectations.
4. Students learn more and retain more when the curriculum is integrated and meaning centered.
5. Challenging curriculum and corresponding high learning expectations for all students will maximize academic outcomes. “The best curriculum for the best is the best curriculum for all.”
6. Students learn better and teachers teach better in an environment where students are self-motivated, self-disciplined and where behavior unfavorable to the learning process is minimized.

The philosophy of the Charter incorporates these tenets. It is based heavily on research of effective schools, the recommendations of the district’s own strategic planning team and the values of the local community.

### The Program Elements:

The essential elements of the Charter are:

1. A strengthened partnership with parents including:
  - a) A Parent/Student/District Compact to define the respective responsibilities of the school and home.
  - b) A strong parent role in advisory and program development.
  - c) A parent education module.
  - d) A parent volunteer module and commitment.
2. An academic, social and conduct contract for students that defines the student’s responsibility for learning, his/her responsibility to the school and the community.

3. The development of high standards for all students through a curriculum that:
  - a) Is meaning centered.
  - b) Prepares students to be college and career ready.
  - c) Is focused on the Common Core State Standards.
  - d) Is highly integrated.
  - e) Is real world based.
  - f) Implements researched supported pedagogy including the use of student engagement techniques, open-ended projects, and an emphasis on persevering, problem solving and thinking critically. Integrates technology to a high degree into the process to improve learning, strengthen teaching and prepare our students to be 21<sup>st</sup> century learners.
  - g) Regularly uses formative and summative assessments to evaluate and inform instruction.
4. A comprehensive Response to Intervention program to help students and their families including:
  - a) Academic support including diagnostic and interventions based on a self-referral, parent referral or teacher referral.
  - b) Behavior and emotional support including peer helpers, student counseling, and parent training.
  - c) Health services support including school nursing, inoculation clinics, staff training, student and employee wellness, and access to public health services.
5. Time allocated to Professional Learning Communities for the purpose of analyzing student performance using data, curriculum development, team meetings, grade level planning, and professional development focused on meeting our students' needs academically, behaviorally and socially. Also, continue with flexible scheduling (i.e. early out Wednesdays, and professional development days) to build in continuous and ongoing time for planning.
6. Access to technology within all classrooms which supports teaching and learning, prepares students to find and manage information and use it appropriately.
7. Create and maintain an environment in which students, staff and parents are safe in their learning environment.
8. Students and parents are enriched through access to technology, field trips (virtual and "real"), exposure to the arts and an expectation to participate in extra-curricular activities.
9. The ongoing partnership with colleges and universities to facilitate staff professional development, promote research, implementation of researched based best practices, train upcoming new teachers, and strengthen the evaluation of the program effectiveness.

10. Build partnerships with outside agencies to facilitate opportunities for enhanced and extended learning.

### The Instructional Team Concept

The staffing formula for demonstrated success in the Pioneer Charter is as follows:

#### Differential staffing:

Certificated: Teachers, School Administrators,  
Director of Learning Support Services

Non Certificated: Instructors  
Instructional Aide/Assistant  
Child Care Aide

#### Other opportunities:

Non Certificated: Special programs, clubs, organizations are encouraged to make use of our facilities to offer more opportunities for students—  
i.e. Boy and Girl Scouts, 4H, and special art opportunities.

### Curriculum and Instructional Design

All curriculum and instruction is aligned with the California Common Core State Standards and Frameworks. Every Student will have sufficient access to standards aligned text books and/or instructional materials through physical or electronic means pursuant to E.C. 60119. Access to instructional materials may be by electronic means. Every child receives a rigorous, well-balanced standards-aligned core program, consistent with the emphasis and design of our original Charter. Teachers at each grade level meet twice monthly to discuss curricular issues and work together to design instructional activities and lessons. They also analyze assessment data and use the results to structure the educational program so that all students receive instruction appropriate to their grade level. Pioneer's instructional program includes music, art, physical education, and technology in addition to the core English, Math Social Science, Science, and health. Teachers are knowledgeable about their grade level standards and have created instructional pacing charts to insure the coverage and depth of knowledge of those standards. Teachers regularly communicate with parents to discuss academic performance. Adjustments to the instruction, employing researched based methodologies are then implemented to remediate any areas of concern and to achieve grade level proficiency in all subject areas.

### Plan for Students Who Are Academically Low Achieving

The district offers a variety of programs to support students not meeting grade level standards. Teachers meet in grade level Professional Learning Communities to review student achievement data on early release Wednesdays. Intervention groups are created and appropriate lessons are designed to meet student needs. Title I instructors and Title I aides provide assistance to teachers in supporting students' access to the curriculum during math

and reading deployment times during the school day at the elementary sites. Teachers and Title I staff work closely together to progress monitor and discuss student achievement. Teachers differentiate instruction providing access to the curriculum by all students within the instructional day. After school intervention at the elementary sites provides additional support in targeted academic areas such as phonics, fluency, comprehension, and math strategies.

Additional services at the Middle School include intervention strategies include additional Language Arts and Math support classes within the regular school day, before and/or after school support, differentiated instruction and deployment of students for reading instruction targeted at the their level. At all sites, if students do not make adequate progress, teachers refer the student to the Student Study Team (SST), using the Response to Intervention model to intervene as soon as possible. A strategic plan is developed at the SST meeting to provide targeted support to identified areas a student may struggle in. Staff responsible for implementing the plan are identified and work closely together to implement procedures that ensure students' academic needs are being addressed.

#### *Plan for Students Who Are Academically High Achieving*

Pioneer's philosophy is that an instructional program for the best students is the best instructional program for all students. The district is known for its rigorous program and high expectations for all. High achieving students are identified through standardized assessment, grade level benchmarks and other summative assessments. High achieving students' needs are specifically met within the regular day through differentiation and also deployment of students for reading instruction targeted at their level (K-6) and Honors classes (8). Middle School students are offered a variety of elective classes such as Spanish, art, band and student government to extend and enrich their learning. All campuses have strong performing arts programs available for all students. Extra-curricular activities are offered to students to extend their learning, provide enrichment and other opportunities for a well-rounded education promoting academics, civic responsibility, social skills, and physical well-being. These activities include but are not limited to Mileage Club, Wipe Out Waste (recycling), Winter play, sports, public speaking, spelling bee, peer mentoring, etc..

#### *Plan for English Learners*

The District identifies English Learners (EL) through the Home Language Survey in compliance with California law. These students are assessed using the California English Language Development Test (CELDT) within 30 calendar days of initial enrollment by trained staff. Students who do not scored Early Advanced or Advanced are identified as English Learners and receive English Language Development instruction by teachers who have CLAD or BCLAD certification, English Language Development (ELD) and/or Specially Designed Academic Instruction in English (SDAIE) certification. The curriculum and instruction for English learners is aligned to the California English Language Development Standards adopted in 2012 that are aligned to The California Common Core Standards. A primary focus of the ELD standards aligned program and instruction is to address English language and literacy skills ELs need in key content areas allowing greater access to the Common core State Standards. Instructional assistants also provide small group and individual instruction using State approved ELD materials in our Language Labs. Instruction



focuses on access to the Common Core State Standards by as students increase fluency in the English language, their proficiency levels are re-evaluated and instruction is adjusted to ensure continued improvement.

The District holds regularly scheduled English Language Advisory Committee (ELAC) meetings throughout the year. These meetings are a venue for parental input and participation in their child's education. The goal of the meetings is to gain parental input as well as an opportunity to inform and educate parents of educational issues so that they can take an increasing role in their child's education. The District also regularly holds District English Language Advisory Meetings in which parents can provide input to the District related matters, programs, and policies.

### *Students Receiving Special Education Services*

Pioneer School District provides special education services to qualified students in full compliance with the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). In concert with IDEA, Pioneer supports and provides services to students receiving Special Education in the Least Restrictive Environment (LRE). Our Charter philosophy is to maintain high expectations for learning and achievement for all students including those receiving special education services.

The district uses child find procedures used to identify students for special education services. Students can be referred by teachers, parents, agencies, appropriate professional persons, and from members of the public. Referrals are also made through the Students Study Team after the resources of the regular education program have been considered and when appropriate, utilized. This is often accomplished through the Response to Intervention process. After a referral has been made, an assessment is conducted in any and all areas of suspected disabilities. These assessments include assessments in one or more of the following areas: behavior, health, psychometric, and or academic.

Students are provided comprehensive access to the core curriculum to the greatest extent possible. To provide access to the comprehensive core curriculum, support is provided per the student's Individualized Education Plan by certificated special education staff and classified staff in concert and close collaboration with the general education teacher. Students' progress toward goals is reviewed and revised annually by an IEP team to ensure progress on goals, appropriate services, supports, accommodations and/or modifications, and educational benefit to guarantee they are making progress with their learning.

The District is part of the Kings County Special Education Local Plan Area (SELPA), serving several County operated programs and the eight school districts within the county. Through the Kings County SELPA, the district ensures a continuum of services to meet the needs of students with severe disabilities. One such program operated by KCOE, Shelly Baird, provides services for severely handicapped students and is housed on the Pioneer Elementary School campus.

Pioneer believes that parent participation is essential to a student's success. This is especially true for students who receive special education services. Parents participate in the education and program of their special needs child by participating in the Individualized Education Plan meeting. There, they provide essential information that the team considers in

providing appropriate services to their child allowing them to access the regular education program to the greatest extent possible. Additionally, regularly scheduled parent teacher conferences are held to keep parents informed of their child's academic progress. The County SELPA also holds Community Advisory Committee Meetings for parents of children with special needs.

### Categorical Programs

Pioneer Union Elementary School District will comply with all conditions of Federal categorical programs and will participate in Federal Program Monitoring as required.

### Facilities

The District takes pride in providing a learning environment that is clean, safe, functional and conducive to learning. The district is comprised of three schools; Pioneer Elementary School which is the original school of the District; Pioneer Middle School built in 2001; and Frontier Elementary School built in 2008. The sites are maintained and are in good repair and in compliance with E.C. 17002 (d).

## **ELEMENT II: Measurable Student Outcomes**

Pioneer's original charter placed high expectations on individual students and held them fully accountable for meeting those expectations. "Assessment of student progress is the core of any assessment of an instructional program. That assessment should measure both how students are meeting internal standards and on their ability to compare favorably with State and/or national norms." The district uses a variety of tools to measure student progress, including formative and summative tests based on classroom instruction, District benchmark tests administered each trimester, Common Core aligned curriculum based measures in preparation for the upcoming Smarter Balanced Assessment. Our Performance Goals are aligned with the Federal, Statewide Assessments and Performance indicators (API).

### Academic Performance Index Measurable Student Outcomes

- For the 2014-2015 school year:
  - The Academic Performance Index for all students LEA-wide in grades 2-8 will increase by 5% or maintain the State target of 800.
  - The Academic Performance Index for all significant subgroups LEA-wide in grades 2-8 will increase by 5% or maintain the State target of 800.
- For the 2015-2016 school year:
  - The Academic Performance Index for all students LEA-wide in grades 2-8 will increase by 5% or maintain the State target of 800.
  - The Academic Performance Index for all significant subgroups LEA-wide in grades 2-8 will increase by 5% or maintain the State target of 800.
- For the 2016-2017 school year:
  - The Academic Performance Index for all students LEA-wide in grades 2-8 will increase by 5% or maintain the State target of 800.
  - The Academic Performance Index for all significant subgroups LEA-wide in grades 2-8 will increase by 5% or maintain the State target of 800.
- For the 2018-2019 school year:

- The Academic Performance Index for all students LEA-wide in grades 2-8 will increase by 5% or maintain the State target of 800.
- The Academic Performance Index for all significant subgroups LEA-wide in grades 2-8 will increase by 5% or maintain the State target of 800.
- For the 2017-2018 school year:
  - The Academic Performance Index for all students LEA-wide in grades 2-8 will increase by 5% or maintain the State target of 800.
  - The Academic Performance Index for all significant subgroups LEA-wide in grades 2-8 will increase by 5% or maintain the State target of 800.

Annual Measurable Achievement Objectives (AMAO)

English Language Learners will make the following growth based on CELDT Scores, transitioning to using English Language Proficiency Assessment for California (ELPAC) scores in 2015-2016 school year:

	2014-2015	2015-2016	2016-2017	2017-2018	2018-2019
AMAO 1	60.5%	62%	63.5%	65%	66.5%
AMAO 2 < 5 years	24.5%	26%	27.5%	29%	30.5%
AMAO > 5 years	51%	53%	55%	57%	59%
Reclassification	+5%	+5%	+5%	+5%	+5%

AMAO 3, as defined by California Department of Education, EL students will reach proficiency on Math and ELA on state administered states.

Additionally:

- All students will be taught by highly qualified teachers.
- All students will be educated in learning environments that are safe, drug free, and conducive to learning.
- All Students will meet or exceed grade level standards in all core subject areas as indicated on their progress reports and/or report cards.

**ELEMENT III: METHODS BY WHICH STUDENT OUTCOMES AND PROGRESS IS MEASURED**

California State Academic Performance Index

The district's plan for achieving targets are defined by California State Department of Education and include:

- A review of each student's progress as measured by the previous year's California State Standardized Testing scores at the beginning of each school year; identification of students considered at risk of retention according to district established criteria and development of appropriate interventions/Student Action Plans.
- A school calendar with time allocated for analysis of benchmark and classroom assessment data; monitor student progress, particularly of at risk students; revise instructional strategies/interventions as appropriate.

- A review of common formative assessments to ensure they are correlated with learning expectations and have the depth of knowledge required of Common Core State standards.
- Ongoing professional development in 21<sup>st</sup> century learning and technology for all staff members which is timely and relevant.
- Purchase and continued support of standards based instructional and supplemental materials, as needed.
- Bi-weekly grade level/content area meetings to ensure continued improvement of the instructional program.

### Methods of Assessment

Student progress in meeting the desired student outcomes is measured and evaluated through a variety of methods:

1. California State assessments administered pursuant to Education Code Part 33, Chapter 5, Article 4, commencing with Section 60640 as certified by the state board
2. California English Language Development Test (CELDT) Scores, transitioning to using English Language Proficiency Assessment for California (ELPAC) scores in 2015-2016 school year.
3. Local assessments and evaluations - schools in the district will conduct local assessments and evaluations that may include:
  - a. Dynamic Indicator of Basic Early Literacy Skills (K-6)
  - b. State adopted textbook curriculum based assessments
  - c. District Benchmark tests in Reading, Writing, Math, K-8; plus Science and History (5-8)
  - d. Teacher developed common formative and summative assessments
  - e. Daily attendance
  - f. Performance on daily work and homework
4. School Climate Assessments
  - a. California Healthy Kids Survey
  - b. Yearly totals of suspensions and expulsions related to Education Code violations reported on the Uniform Management Information System (UMIRS) shall not be greater than three and total more than one incident per 100 students enrolled or a fraction thereof.

### Use and Reporting of Data

Student achievement data are collected, analyzed, and reported to school staff and parents through the following measures.

1. Methods of collecting data:

- a. Aeries data management and Illuminate software to collect data from state assessments, local benchmark assessments, and classroom formative and summative assessments
  - b. Data reports from the California Measurement of Academic Performance and Progress
  - c. Teacher collected data: performance on daily work, teacher observations, homework, portfolios, projects and student attendance
2. Forums for analyzing data:
- a. Teacher analysis of collected student data
  - b. Grade level and school-wide Professional Learning Communities
  - c. Vertical curriculum articulation
  - d. Parent-teacher conferences
  - e. Staff meetings
  - f. Intervention teams
  - g. Student Study Teams
  - h. Administrative leadership meetings
  - i. Parent Advisory Council
  - j. School Board meetings
3. Means of reporting data:
- a. Student State Testing Reports
  - b. Parent conferences
  - c. Student information System (AERIES) portal allowing parental access to student grades and assignments
  - d. Teacher web pages
  - e. Media reporting
  - f. Board meetings
  - g. School Accountability Report Cards

Analysis of student performance data is an ongoing process used to improve the total educational program so all students can progress to meet the district proficiency outcomes.

#### **ELEMENT IV: GOVERNANCE STRUCTURE**

The district's governing structure is somewhat modified to reflect the philosophy of creating more opportunities for faculty, parents and community to have a greater role in decision making.

##### **The role of the Board of Trustees:**

The Pioneer Board of Trustees, consisting of five (5) members, will continue to be selected in the present manner through the election process, as governed by state and local statute. The District contains five "Trustee Areas." One board member is elected from each of the five areas. The ultimate authority for the governance of the district will remain with this elected Board of Trustees. Policies will continue to be introduced and enacted at public board meetings as needed for new mandates and programs. The Board of Trustees actively seeks and enthusiastically welcomes parent input on a wide range of topics such as curriculum and instruction, assessment and accountability, school operations, and budget and finance.

The role of the Superintendent:

The Superintendent has primary responsibility for implementing district vision, policies, and managing the day-to-day operations of the district.

The role of the Director of Learning Support Services:

The district Director of Learning Support Services is charged with the responsibility of all instructional materials, curriculum implementation, board policies related to curriculum and instruction, categorical programs, coordinating district wide professional development, support for site administrators, a resource for teachers, as well as the oversight of all assessments and special programs in the district.

The role of the Site Administration:

The day-to-day operations of schools within the district are the responsibilities of the school site principal and assistant principal in accordance with the school specific operational plan. Each site administrator is responsible for adherence to all applicable Federal and State laws, policies of the District, and implementation of adopted curriculum and programs.

The Administrative Cabinet:

This cabinet is composed of designated administrative staff and will be under the direct supervision of the superintendent. The administrative cabinet will meet regularly with the goal of positively impacting student learning and promote a safe, engaging educational environment. This will be accomplished through teamwork, collaboration, decision making, and policy implementation and changes as needed. The focus of the cabinet is to direct the resources of the District to our mission and would include coordinating services such as transportation, child nutrition, health, and other departments towards improving student learning and achievement.

The Curriculum Cabinet

This cabinet is focused on instructional and academic outcomes. It is comprised of the superintendent, site principals, Director of Learning Support Services, Director of Technology. The cabinet assesses district-wide needs pertaining to curriculum, professional development, instructional planning and develops plans to address the identified needs.

School Site Leadership

Professional Learning Communities (PLC) provide the structure by which school site leadership is organized and site leadership business is conducted. Professional Learning Communities take on a variety of forms ranging from grade level teams, department teams to representative teams. In PLC's, teams of teachers, administrators and support personnel review and make decisions centered on student achievement measures, programmatic issues, curriculum, school climate and other organizational and educational issues that parallel and may contribute to but, do not conflict with the governance responsibility of other district governance bodies and/or falling within the scope of collective bargaining.

The Student Council:

Each school site shall have a student council composed of students selected by their peers to represent student interests. Representatives of the student council will meet with administrative staff to advise them on matters relating to student affairs and concerns. The middle school shall also have a student report monthly to the Board of Trustees as part of their duties and to give students an opportunity to address the Board.

Additionally, student representatives shall also serve on a variety of committees and councils as appropriate to give input and a student voice to the issues/concerns/topics addressed by the committee and/or council. (Examples include the Wellness Committee).

The District Parent Advisory Council:

This council will represent the greater interests of the school community and advise administration on matters which impact the school and community relationship. The committee will be composed of parents representing the various demographic and programs in the District, certificated and classified school site staff, school site administration, and district office administration. The Superintendent or designee has the direct responsibility to organize and direct the Council. The Council will meet at least 6 times a year with defined bylaws, scheduled meetings, formal agendas, minutes and follow the Roberts Rules of Order in conducting meetings. The District Parent Advisory Council offers the opportunity of shared governance in that the role is to advise and make recommendations to the Board of Trustees.

The Kings County Office of Education

The Kings County Office of Education is charged with monitoring the Charter Program and evaluating its success and performance. Periodic visits, assessment scores and review will be done with the administration and County Office of Education staff and County Superintendent.

The California Department of Education and the State Board of Education:

The State Superintendent of Public Instruction and the State Board of Education will share the responsibility of approving this charter renewal. Following its approval, they will have the responsibility to monitor its implementation. Operating within the intent of the approved charter renewal, the District board of trustees will have all other authority for the operation of the District and its programs.

**ELEMENT V: Qualifications of Individuals Employed**

In order to be creative and flexible in providing an optimal learning environment, the district has board policies and procedures for all those who work with children. These policies and procedures will be reflected in the district's hiring practices, evaluation methods, and professional development. In addition, it is expected that all employees of the district have a solid understanding of and commitment to the importance of student success and a commitment to a collaborative partnership.

Employee Qualifications

- Superintendent

The superintendent must hold a valid California administrative services credential. The superintendent is employed by and responsible to the Board of Trustees. The superintendent shall have a criminal background check performed pursuant to Education Code Section 44830.1

- Principal

The principal must hold a valid California administrative services credential and a valid California teaching or comparable credential along with the experience and skills required to fulfill the responsibilities of the position. The principal is employed by the Board of Trustees and is responsible to the superintendent. The principal shall have a criminal background check performed pursuant to Education Code Section 44830.1

- Teachers/ Coordinators

Classroom teachers and coordinators must hold valid California teaching credential. All teachers and coordinators are fully credentialed for the subject and pupils they teach in accordance with E.C 44258.9. They are employed by the Board of Trustees and are responsible to the principal and superintendent. Teachers shall have a criminal background check performed pursuant to Education Code section 44830.1

- Counselors/psychologists: school counselors and psychologists will be fully qualified with the appropriate service credential for their position.
- Nurses: all nurses (RN and LVN) will be fully qualified with the appropriate license to administer the health programs within the district.

- Classified Personnel

All classified personnel must meet the qualifications and standards established for employment and are responsible to the superintendent and principal. All classified employees shall have a criminal background check performed pursuant to Education Code Section 44830.1.

- Instructional Aides: all instructional aides will also have met the State and/or Federal prerequisite requirements for paraprofessionals.

During the life of the Charter, the District will have the flexibility of hiring non-certificated instructors, hereafter referred to as instructors, as allowed by law in non-core areas. Areas in which a non-certificated instructor may be contracted may include but not limited to computer instruction and physical education. Instructors shall demonstrate qualifications and knowledge of non-academic areas they are assigned.

The district will have the option of entering into agreements with local colleges and universities in order to become a professional development district. These agreements would allow college students in neighboring areas to do observations or student teaching in the district. This would further allow classes to be offered for student teachers and interested staff in the district. Furthermore, instructors in the district would have access to the supervisors of student teachers and to course work leading to their credentials.

### Compensation and Benefits

All new and existing employees will participate in STRS, PERS, and/or Federal Social Security, as appropriate. The Personnel Director will be responsible for ensuring that the each employee is enrolled in the appropriate retirement system such as California State



Teachers' Retirement System(CALSTRS), California Public Employees Retirement System (CALPERS), or federal social security, as required by EC Section 47605(b)(5) (K).The district makes all employer contributions as required by STRS, PERS, and Federal Social Security. The district also makes contributions for workers compensation insurance, unemployment insurance, and any other payroll obligations of an employer. Tenure and accrued seniority and leaves enumerated in current employee handbooks and collective bargaining agreements shall also remain in effect.

### Employee Representation

The District shall be deemed the exclusive public school employer of the employees of the district for the purposes of the Education Employment Relations Act.

The district recognizes the Pioneer Teachers' Association as the collective bargaining agency for all non-management certificated employees. It agrees that any contracts and/or letters of understanding between the District and the Association in existence on the effective date of the Charter and subsequent Charter Renewals, and provisions of the State of California Education Code, and Government Code 3540 et Seq. ("The Rodda Act"), pertaining to employee rights will continue to be binding on both parties until ended or modified through future bargaining agreements.

The District further recognizes the Classified Employees Association (CSEA) as the collective bargaining agency for all classified non-confidential employees. The same agreement regarding contracts, MOUs and collective bargaining are the same as for the certificated employees.

For purposes of conducting collective bargaining, the charter District and its employee representative units will continue to comply with board policy and applicable state codes.

### Rights of School District Employees

The district acknowledges that no employee can be forced to work for the charter school district; however, since this is the 20th year of the Pioneer Union Elementary Charter School District, it is also acknowledged that all current employees have agreed to work under the charter. The charter will continue to pertain to all district staff for the duration of the charter's term. The all-district charter's term will be for five (5) years, unless voluntarily surrendered by the district's Board of Trustees or revoked by action of the State Board of Education and State Superintendent of Public Instruction prior to its expiration. All new employees are informed, before hiring, of the charter status of the district. Once a new employee signs a contract with the district, having been given that information, that employee is deemed to be an employee of Pioneer Union Elementary Charter School District. If the charter is voluntarily surrendered or revoked, all employees will revert to their status as employees of the Pioneer Union Elementary School District.

### Employee Dispute Resolution:

In the event of a dispute between the District and any employee, the following internal dispute resolution process shall be implemented:

- Should a dispute arise at the staff level, the principal or designee will meet with the staff member in an informal setting to discuss and resolve the dispute. The informal meeting

shall take place within ten working days from the day the staff member registers the complaint.

- If the two parties are unable to resolve the dispute, the aggrieved party will put his/her complaint in writing and submit it to the Superintendent who serves as the Complaint Officer for the District. The Superintendent will then follow the board policy and any applicable Collective Bargaining Agreement provisions for complaint/dispute resolution in accordance with the policy procedures and timelines.

#### **ELEMENT VI: Health and Safety of Pupils and Staff**

Pursuant to Education Code 44237, the District will adhere to state laws regarding fingerprinting and drug testing of employees. All employees will be required to submit a valid negative test for tuberculosis. The district will adhere to existing board policy pertaining to the safety and health of all employees and students.

The district will maintain policies and procedures conducive to school safety; responses to natural disasters and emergencies; and blood-borne pathogens, as well as appropriate policies related to student behavior and the administration of prescription drugs and other medicines. District nurses are available to meet the health and safety needs of both students and staff.

The district will maintain policies as a drug, alcohol, and tobacco-free workplace. A School Resource Officer is employed by the district and supports the safe school environment in a variety of ways.

All information related to the aforementioned policies will be included in parent/student or employee handbooks and will be reviewed on an ongoing basis, as determined by the district and/or the Board of Trustees policies.

The district has a district-wide safety plan entitled, Pioneer Safety Plan which is updated annually and is available for staff and parents to review as needed. Additionally, an abbreviated form of the Plan is posted in each classroom and office.

The facilities will receive an annual inspection by the city and/or county fire marshal and a property and liability loss control specialist to assure compliance with established health and safety standards (including Federal ADA). The food services facility will be inspected by the county health department.

The district will meet all federal, state, and local requirements for water, friable asbestos, and other toxic materials.

The district will maintain liability and excess liability, as provided by the Organization of Self-Insured Schools, JPA, and Schools Excess Liability. Workers compensation will be provided pursuant to provision of the California Labor Code.

#### **ELEMENT VII: Racial and Ethnic Balance**

The existing grade-level configuration of the district ensures a racial and ethnic balance that is reflective of the general population residing within the territorial jurisdiction of the district.

The schools that comprise the district are philosophically and practically treated as one school on different sites. The schools, and the grade levels they serve, are as follows:

- Pioneer Elementary School: Grades K-5
- Frontier Elementary School : Grades K-5
- Pioneer Middle School: Grades 6-8

### **ELEMENT VIII: Admission Requirements**

Admission to the District is open to all schools of the district per board policy for inter-district enrollment as adopted by the Board of Trustees. If the number of students who wish to attend a school within the district exceeds the school's capacity, enrollment, except for existing pupils within the physical boundaries of the district, is determined by a public random methodology.

The requirements for admissions shall be:

1. Student has satisfied all state required immunizations.
2. Parent and student sign a compact indicating they will adhere to the elements of the charter agreement
3. Student is not under an expulsion order from his/her former school and/or district for violations pertaining to health and safety codes

Out-of-district attendance requests shall be subject to review by the superintendent/designee regarding expulsion/suspension and a recommendation taken to the Board of Trustees at a regularly scheduled board meeting.

#### **Non-Discrimination**

The Pioneer Union Elementary School District is nonsectarian in its programs, admission policies, employment practices, and all other operations. The district shall not charge tuition and shall not discriminate against any person on the basis of disability, gender, nationality race or ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation or any actual or perceived characteristic that is contained in the definition of hate crimes set forth in section 422.55 of the Penal Code in any program or activity.

#### **Transportation**

Pioneer Union Elementary Charter School District provides home-to-school transportation under the Pioneer Transportation Policy for those students who reside within the district's geographic boundaries. This transportation policy of the District is reviewed periodically for revision as new housing occurs in the district and student numbers change. The district transportation system functions under the guidelines of the California Department of Education's Office of School Transportation. Students who reside outside the physical boundaries of the District are responsible for transportation to and from school.

**ELEMENT IX: FINANCIAL AUDIT, FISCAL REPORTING AND ACCOUNTABILITY****Audits**

Pioneer Union Elementary Charter School District will adhere to the Board of Trustees' Policies and Administrative Regulations, and participate in the board's annual audit of fiscal and program operations.

The Board of Trustees oversees the selection of an independent auditor. The qualifications for an auditor are described in a request for proposal. The scope of the audit is as follows:

- Verifies the accuracy of the district's financial statements, attendance, and enrollment accounting practices, and reviews the district's internal controls.
- The audit is conducted in accordance with generally accepted accounting principles, the standards established by the Government Accounting Standards Board (GASB), and applicable provisions of the current edition of Standards and Procedures for Audits of California K-12 Local Educational Agencies (issued annually).
- As required under applicable federal law, the audit scope is expanded to include items and processes specified in any applicable office of Management and Budget Circulars.
- Completion of the audit should be within six months of the close of the fiscal year and before December 15<sup>th</sup>.
- Copies of the audit are to be given to the district business manager and are presented to the Board of Trustees at a regularly scheduled board meeting, following which copies are duly filed with state and local agencies as required by law.
- Audit exceptions or deficiencies are reported to the Board of Trustees with recommendations on resolving the exceptions.
- It is the responsibility of the district to resolve exceptions or deficiencies.

**Budget**

The District's superintendent, assistant superintendent of fiscal services, principals and directors manually develop a balanced operating budget to be approved by the Board of Trustees as a part of the annual budgetary process. The district is funded under the Local Control Funding Formula (LCFF). The district's independent auditor annually conducts audits of the fiscal operation. To the extent required under applicable federal law, the audit scope will be expanded to include items and processes specified in any applicable office management and budget circulars. The district will comply with Kings County Office of Education audit and accountability practices, though it will retain its rights under the parameters of charter school law. Any disputes regarding the resolution of audit exceptions and/or deficiencies will be referred to the dispute resolution process contained in step V.

**Financial Reporting**

The accounting of the district's budgets, revenues, and expenditures are conducted in accordance to the district's Board of Trustees' Policies and Administrative Regulations. The district contracts an independent auditing firm to conduct the annual audit of fiscal and programmatic operations and report finding to the Board of Trustees. The district complies

with state financial reporting regulations by submitting the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> interim report, unaudited actuals, end of year projection, and budget report. These reports are submitted to CDE through the county office of education which monitors the fiscal health of the district in accordance with applicable provisions of state law, generally referred to as Assembly Bill 1200 (Chapter 1213, Statutes of 1991).

### Insurance

The district purchases general liability insurance, workers compensation insurance, and other necessary coverage through carriers approved by the district's Board of Trustees.

### Administrative Services

The District is governed by the district's Board of Trustees. The superintendent and assistant superintendent of fiscal services are responsible for managing the district under policies and regulations adopted by the board of trustees. Services that are administered include but are not limited to: financial, management, personnel services, payroll, maintenance/operations, transportation, food services, special education, and curriculum and instruction.

### Facilities

Pioneer Union Elementary School District consists of 3 school sites and a District Office:

- Pioneer Elementary School (CDS 16-63990-6010557) 559-584-8831  
8810 14<sup>th</sup> Avenue, Hanford, CA 93230
- Frontier Elementary School (CDS 16-63990-0116699) 559-585-2430  
1854 N. Mustang Drive, Hanford, CA 93230
- Pioneer Middle School (CDS 16-63990-6110233) 559-584-0112  
101 W. Pioneer Way, Hanford, CA 93230
- Pioneer Union Elementary Charter School District Office  
1888 Mustang Drive, Hanford, CA 93230 559-585-2400

As the community of Hanford continues to grow, the enrollment of the school district will grow also. This charter petition will allow the district to expand its facilities through land purchases and/or building projects to meet the expansion needs, both present and future, of the Pioneer Union Elementary Charter School District.

## **ELEMENT X: SUSPESIONS, EXPULSIONS AND/OR LEAVING THE CHARTER SCHOOL DISTRICT**

The district will maintain student discipline policies. These policies will be printed and distributed as part of the Parent/Student Handbook and will describe the expectations of the district for attendance, mutual respect, substance abuse, violence, safety, and work habits. Each parent and student will be required to verify, by signature, that they have reviewed and understand the policies. Policies and lists of offenses by which a student must or maybe suspended or expelled will be reviewed annually by the superintendent or designee and revised accordingly to conform to any changes in Education Code pertaining to suspension,

expulsion and due process. Revisions will be reviewed and approved by the Pioneer Union Elementary Charter School District Board of Education.

Students may be suspended and/or expelled for violations of the California Education Code Section 48900 et seq., 48915 et seq. and other provisions of state and federal statutes regarding student safety issues. Pioneer Union Elementary Charter School District believes the proposed lists of offenses and procedures provide adequate safety for students, staff, and visitors to the school and serve the best interests the school's pupils and their parents/guardians.

All students will be afforded due process as outlined in Education Code Section 48918 et seq. Due process includes the following steps: meeting with teacher and student; meeting with teacher, student, and parent(s); meeting with teacher, student, parent(s), and site administrator; meeting with teacher, student, parent(s), site administrator, and superintendent or designee. Should a student be expelled or leave the charter school prior to completing the school year, Pioneer Union Elementary Charter School District will notify the Superintendent of school of which the student is a resident. A copy of the student's cumulative record, transcripts and health information within thirty days of the student's last day of attendance. In cases of truancy and poor attendance, or chronic absenteeism the Student Attendance Review Board (SARB) will review the students' attendance records and circumstances causing poor attendance. The SARB will be composed of District personnel and administration, outside agencies, and may include law enforcement and the District Attorney's office. (This paragraph applies only to pupils subject to compulsory full-time education pursuant to E.C 48200).

Recommendations at each level of the process could include additional contracts, modifications, and/or interventions, in addition to alternative placements in neighboring districts and/or programs. The decision of the board of trustees is final and not subject to appeal to Kings County Office of Education. Yearly totals of suspensions and expulsions related to Education Code violations reported on the Uniform Management Information System (UMIRS) shall not be greater than three and total more than one incident per 100 students enrolled or a fraction thereof.

Policies and regulations will conform to applicable federal and state laws regarding students with exceptional needs.

#### **ELEMENT XI: COMPENSATION AND BENEFITS**

All new and existing employees will participate in STRS, PERS, and/or Federal Social Security, as appropriate. The Personnel Director will be responsible for ensuring that the each employee is enrolled in the appropriate retirement system such as California State Teachers' Retirement System (CALSTRS), California Public Employees Retirement System (CALPERS), or federal social security, as required by EC Section 47605(b)(5) (K). The district makes all employer contributions as required by STRS, PERS, and Federal Social Security. The district also makes contributions for workers compensation insurance, unemployment insurance, and any other payroll obligations of an employer. Tenure and accrued seniority and leaves enumerated in current employee handbooks and collective bargaining agreements shall also remain in effect.

**ELEMENT XII: PUBLIC SCHOOL ATTENDANCE ALTERNATIVES.**

No student residing within the district shall be required to attend schools of Pioneer Union Elementary Charter School District. The district will ensure that a non-charter public school enrollment option is made available for any student residing in the Pioneer Union Elementary School District whose parents elect not to have the student attend a charter school (see addendum G,H & I). The option need only be for enrollment in any non-charter public school, not necessarily a specific non-charter public school that the parents may request, pursuant to Education Code Section 46600.

**ELEMENT XIII: Rights of School District Employees**

The district acknowledges that no employee can be forced to work for the charter school district; however, since this is the 20th year of the Pioneer Union Elementary Charter School District, it is also acknowledged that all current employees have agreed to work under the charter. The charter will continue to pertain to all district staff for the duration of the charter's term. The all-district charter's term will be for five (5) years, unless voluntarily surrendered by the district's Board of Trustees or revoked by action of the State Board of Education and State Superintendent of Public Instruction prior to its expiration. All new employees are informed, before hiring, of the charter status of the district. Once a new employee signs a contract with the district, having been given that information, that employee is deemed to be an employee of Pioneer Union Elementary Charter School District. If the charter is voluntarily surrendered or revoked, all employees will revert to their status as employees of the Pioneer Union Elementary School District.

**Employee Dispute Resolution:**

In the event of a dispute between the District and any employee, the following internal dispute resolution process shall be implemented:

- Should a dispute arise at the staff level, the principal or designee will meet with the staff member in an informal setting to discuss and resolve the dispute. The informal meeting shall take place within ten working days from the day the staff member registers the complaint.
- If the two parties are unable to resolve the dispute, the aggrieved party will put his/her complaint in writing and submit it to the Superintendent who serves as the Complaint Officer for the District. The Superintendent will then follow the board policy and any applicable Collective Bargaining Agreement provisions for complaint/dispute resolution in accordance with the policy procedures and timelines.

**ELEMENT XIV: Dispute Resolution**

The procedures to be followed by the charter district and the entity granting the charter to resolve disputes relating to provisions of the charter, as required by Education Code section 47605(b)(5)(N), include at a minimum that:

- (A) Pioneer Union Elementary School District acknowledges that the State Board of Education and Superintendent of Public Instruction are not local education agencies.
- (B) Because the State Board of Education and Superintendent of Public Instruction are not local education agencies, they may choose to resolve a dispute directly instead of pursuing the dispute resolution process. If the State Board of Education and Superintendent of Public Instruction intend to resolve a dispute directly instead of pursuing the dispute resolution process, the district must first hold a public hearing to consider arguments for and against the direct resolution of the dispute.
- (C) If the substance of a dispute is a matter that could result in the taking of appropriate action, including, but not limited to, revocation of the charter in accordance with Education Code section 47604.5, the matter will be addressed at the State Board of Education's and Superintendent of Public Instruction's discretion in accordance with that provision of law and any regulations pertaining thereto.
- (D) The costs of the dispute resolution process, if needed, will be shared by the district and the State Board of Education.

Pioneer Union Elementary School District agrees to work to accomplish all tasks necessary to fully implement this charter. If the State Board of Education and Superintendent of Public Instruction believe they have cause to revoke this charter, they agree to notify the Board of Trustees of the district and grant the district reasonable time to respond to the notice and take appropriate corrective action prior to the revocation of the charter petition. If such an action takes place, Pioneer Union Elementary Charter School District will revert back to Pioneer Union Elementary School District. Additionally, the District foresees no civil liability effects upon the District or its authorizer, the California State Board of Education, as a result of its charter status.

#### **ELEMENT XV: Employee Representation**

The Pioneer Union Elementary Charter School District shall be deemed the exclusive public school employer of the employees of the District for the purposes of the Education Employment Relations Act.

The district recognizes the Pioneer Teachers' Association as the collective bargaining agency for all non-management certificated employees. It agrees that any contracts and/or letters of understanding between the District and the Association in existence on the effective date of the Charter and subsequent Charter Renewals, and provisions of the State of California Education Code, and Government Code 3540 et Seq. ("The Rodda Act"), pertaining to employee rights will continue to be binding on both parties until ended or modified through future bargaining agreements.

The District further recognizes the Classified Employees Association (CSEA) as the collective bargaining agency for all classified non-confidential employees. The same agreement regarding contracts, MOUs and collective bargaining are the same as for the certificated employees.

For purposes of conducting collective bargaining, the charter District and its employee representative units will continue to comply with board policy and applicable state codes.



**ELEMENT XVI: Closure Protocol**

Pioneer Union Elementary School District has been a public school since 1820. If the charter becomes inoperative, the district reverts to non-charter status. Notice of the change in status will be provided to all interested and concerned parties, including but not limited to, students and their families, employees, the Kings County Office of Education, and the State Board of Education and State Superintendent of Public Instruction (through the California Department of Education). Student records will continue to be maintained on site as usual.

**Impact on the Charter Authorizer**

As of June 30, 2014, the Pioneer Union Elementary School District will have operated as an all-charter district for a 20 year period. During that period, the district does not believe its charter status per se has resulted in any major workload to the charter authorizer (i.e., the State Superintendent of Public Instruction and State Board of Education, served by the staff of the California Department of Education. The district foresees no increase in the authorizer's workload if the charter is renewed for a fourth five-year period (i.e., to June 30, 2019). Additionally, the District foresees no civil liability effects upon the District or its authorizer, the California State Board of Education, as a result of its charter status.

**Modifications and Changes to the Charter**

Modifications or changes that are limited to the implementation timelines, specific curriculum content, job descriptions, student and parent expectations or other specific areas may be made with the approval of the Board of Trustees in consultation with the Superintendent. Modifications or changes that involve items related to: salary schedules, health and welfare benefits, tenure and/or accrued seniority, and leaves of employees will be made through the collective bargaining process.

If modifications are being contemplated to the conceptual basis of the Charter or they are significant changes in operational procedures; the district will confer with the California Department of Education (as the representative of the charter authorizer) to determine if the proposed changes constitute material revisions. If the changes are material revisions, they must first be approved by a majority of the district's stakeholders which includes teachers, parents, administration, and by the Board of Trustees. Finally, they must then be approved by the State Superintendent of Public Instruction and the State Board of Education.